



## VISA PAYROLL CARD SUCCESS STORY

# Chicago Public Schools achieves 99.8% e-pay

Since implementing a Visa® Payroll card program in 2010, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has achieved nearly 100% electronic payroll distribution. More than 5,000 district employees and student workers now enjoy the convenience, flexibility and safety of a Visa Payroll card.

### AT A GLANCE

**CHALLENGE:** Reduce payroll distribution costs and optimize payroll processes

**SOLUTION:** Provide a Visa Payroll card — enabling electronic payment for all student workers and district employees

#### RESULTS:

- Increased e-payment to 99.8%
- Reallocated one FTE
- Streamlined program processes

#### KEYS TO SUCCESS:

- Strong partnership between CPS and the Visa card provider
- Efficient implementation process with turnkey training
- Detailed communications plan for district employees and student workers

### The Situation

Chicago Public Schools is the third largest school district in the country and employs approximately 50,000 teachers, administrators and support staff. A seasonal student worker base, which can reach 4,000 participants, is also part of the district's payroll program.

In 2003, CPS implemented an ATM card program for paying student workers, as paper checks were difficult for students to cash and expensive for CPS to issue and reconcile. The ATM card program provided some efficiency, but the district still spent a lot of time and money administering card issuance and payments. Also, the ATM card was not very functional for students as they could only use it to get cash at ATMs.

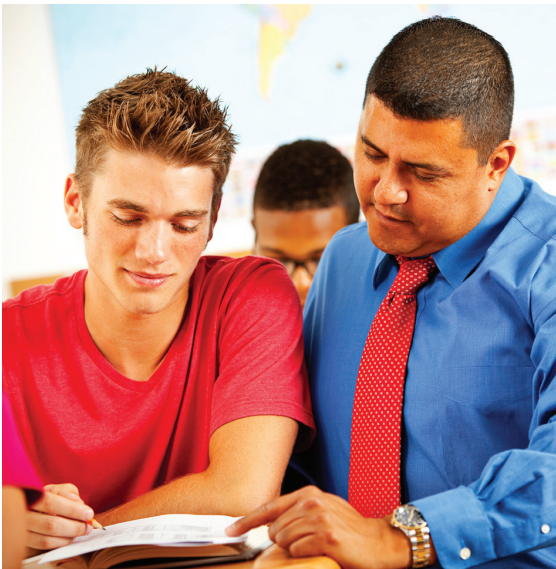
In 2008, CPS began looking for ways to further reduce expenses related to payroll distribution. District administrators wanted to improve the ATM card program, and to also provide an electronic payment option for unbanked district personnel who could not enroll in traditional direct deposit.

### The Solution

In March 2010, CPS replaced the ATM card program with a Visa Payroll card program. This card solution provided both district employees and student workers with a safe and convenient way to get and use their pay.

The Visa Payroll card was an ideal solution for CPS as it could be issued to any employee or student worker without the need for an application or credit check — everyone qualified.

The Visa Payroll card program took the district out of the account maintenance and ownership loop by transferring this responsibility to the cardholder and the Visa card provider. CPS now only facilitates establishing an account in the employee's or student's name while the Visa card provider handles all the issuance and customer service responsibilities, including lost/stolen cards. This new solution and shift of responsibility has streamlined the payment process so significantly that CPS has been able to free one FTE for other projects.



### VISA PAYROLL CARD

The Visa Payroll card gives Chicago Public Schools an easy and cost-effective solution for paying student workers and unbanked employees. All cardholders enjoy the security and convenience of making purchases, paying bills, and accessing cash everywhere Visa Debit cards are accepted.

## Program Implementation

### Dedicated Program Team

CPS and the Visa card provider formed a cross-functional team that took the new payment program from concept to full rollout. With approval and support from the CPS School Board, the project team was able to smoothly implement the new card program and achieve the targeted results.

### Training and Product Support

After program set up and testing were completed, the Visa card provider gave training to the CPS staff via webinar and detailed FAQs. CPS payroll personnel quickly learned how to set up and load cards, and transfer data. The Visa card provider also taught the staff how to generate system reports that integrated into the district's payroll system.

Concurrent with the introduction of the Visa Payroll card, CPS established two new policies:

1. All employees must sign up for direct deposit within the first 30 days of employment or else they will receive a Visa Payroll card
2. All student workers automatically receive a Visa Payroll card

### Program Introduction

The program team carefully planned the communications to stakeholders. Principals and Vice Principals received program details in advance so they could prepare their staff. Employees were given flyers describing the program and directing them to an internal website for more information.

The Visa Payroll card option was integrated into the direct deposit form presented to each new employee — making sign up quick and easy. The form offers information about the card and provides a link to a list of FAQs furnished by the Visa card provider.

All materials and online information emphasize card benefits, including:

- Immediate and secure receipt of pay
- No check-cashing fees or hassles
- Freedom to shop everywhere Visa Debit cards are accepted
- Online bill pay capabilities
- Easy cash access
- Zero liability protection against unauthorized card transactions

Since the launch of the Visa Payroll card, CPS has received only positive feedback.

### Future Plans

CPS anticipates hiring many new teachers as its aging teacher population retires. The Visa Payroll card will continue to be promoted to new hires and will be used to pay all student workers. The solution has provided cost savings and has helped CPS to streamline the wage payment process.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT PROFILE

**Number of employees:** 50,000

**Student Workers:** 2,000-4,000

**Locations:** 700 schools and 2 district offices

**Percentage of e-payment:** 99.8%

**Number of Visa Payroll cards:** 5,000+

*"The Visa Payroll card is much better than the ATM card we had before because with Visa I can use it to shop everywhere I want. Plus, I don't have to go to an ATM to get cash as I can get cash back at the grocery store."*

Mary S.  
Sophomore

*"The Visa Payroll card program has met all our objectives. We are very happy with our choice."*

Tom Miller  
Compliance Manager for Chicago Public Schools

## Interested in reaching 100% e-payment?

- Visit [www.visa.com/payroll](http://www.visa.com/payroll)
- Email [payrollcards@visa.com](mailto:payrollcards@visa.com)